

Quarterly highlights - Update on Chinese Mitten Crab Reports from the Public.

Update on Chinese Mitten Crab Public Reporting System

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In 2001 the Stockton Fish and Wildlife Service Office, in conjunction with the California Department of Fish and Game set up a reporting system for Chinese mitten crabs (*Eriocheir sinensis*). The reporting system consists of a toll free number 1-888-321-8913, paid-postage surveys and an online reporting form at: (<http://www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/mittencrab/sightings.asp>).

The number of reported mitten crab sightings throughout the San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta has decreased since the program began in 2001. Public reports of mitten crabs, to the reporting system, have declined from 147 in 2001 to 53 in 2002 and to 22 in 2003. Other types of monitoring suggest that the population has been declining since 1998. Adult mitten crab counts at the State Water Project & John Skinner Fish Protective Facility (SWP) and the Central Valley Project & Tracy Fish Collection Facility (CVP) have declined from a maximum in 1998 to a minimum in 2003 (Table 1).

The number of mitten crabs could quickly rebound as has been seen with other populations of introduced mitten crabs. In addition to being at relatively low levels, age 0+ mitten crabs appear to be most abundant in stretches of streams near the San Francisco Bay (see "Assessment of Mitten Crab Habitat Preference and Monitoring Methods in the San Francisco Estuary" in this issue).

Table 1. Annual Adult Mitten Crab Count at the Skinner Fish Protective Facility (SWP) and the Central Valley Project & Tracy Fish Collection Facility (data provided by Steve Foss, CDFG)

Year	SWP	CVP
1998	272,704	N/A
1999	25,192	39,582
2000	4,702	2,556
2001	7,293	27,282
2002	1,178	2,450
2003	90	648